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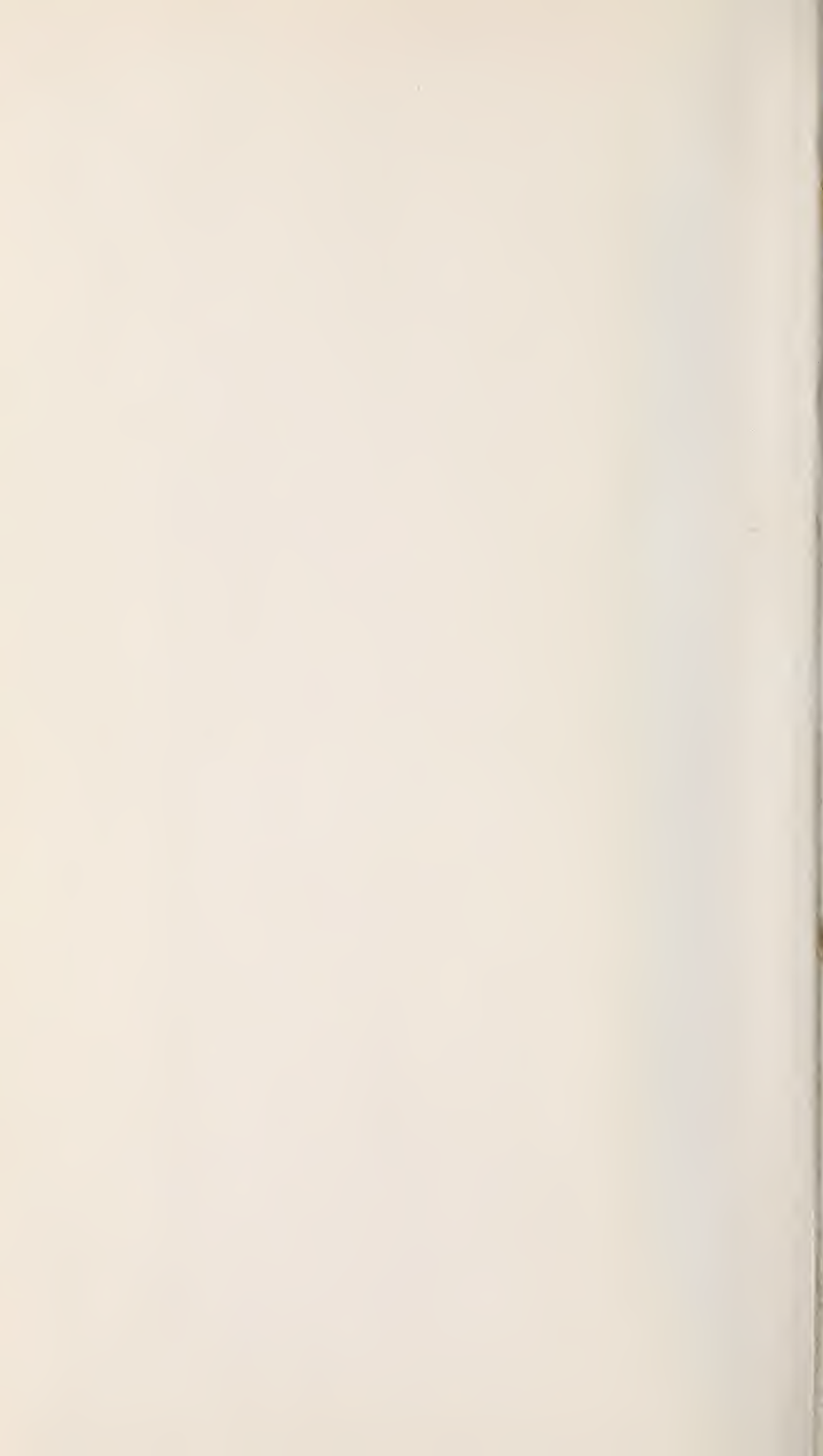
1835











LITERARY FABLES,

FROM

THE SPANISH OF YRIARTE.

BY RICHARD ANDREWS.

Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.



LONDON:
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TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD HOLLAND,

THE DISTINGUISHED LOVER AND PATRON OF
SPANISH LITERATURE,

This Volume

IS, BY PERMISSION, DEDICATED,
AS A TRIBUTE OF SINCERE RESPECT,

BY

HIS LORDSHIP'S OBLIGED AND

MOST OBEDIENT HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

IN offering the present work to the favour of the public, it becomes necessary for me to say a few words with respect to a kind of literature which may seem to belong rather to the days that are gone, and to possess few attractions for the taste of modern times.

As an elegant and impressive mode of conveying the most useful lessons, this spe-

cies of composition must ever be held in the highest estimation; but then, an opinion is entertained that the materials for fables have been long since exhausted; that the labours of Æsop and Phædrus, and, more recently, of La Fontaine and Gay, in the same line, have left to succeeding fabulists little hope or power of novelty. From this objection, whatever may be its value in general, the fables of Yriarte must claim to be completely exempted; the originality of their conception, in being applied solely to literary subjects, is alone a sufficient distinction, but the lively and spirited style in which they are executed, abounding with rich and sparkling humour, entitle them to a degree of merit peculiarly their own. Ingenious in their invention and useful in their end, they may rank as no unworthy supplement to the 'Ars Poetica' of Horace, constituting a code of laws which take cogni-

zance of almost every possible offence against the principles of good taste and good sense, and performing the same service for literature which the fables of others have effected in the cause of virtue and morality.

Yriarte died in 1790. Besides the Fables, which have long won him an immortal reputation in his own country and amongst all lovers of Spanish literature, he wrote, ‘*La Musica*,’ an elegant poem, which has been translated into English.

Throughout this version of the ‘*Fabulas Literarias*,’ I have endeavoured to give the spirit of the author rather than a dull and literal translation. With this object in view, I have not scrupled to alter those parts which, containing allusions to customs purely Spanish, it would be impossible to give with any satisfaction to an English rea-

der, and to adapt others in order to increase their effect, substituting something, as parallel as possible, and more applicable to our present habits and ideas. These instances are, however, few in number, and, with their exception, I have adhered to the text with scrupulous fidelity. There is, however, something in the wit and humour of the Spanish, which is scarcely to be communicated to other languages, and this difficulty has been considerably increased by the necessity of not transgressing that conciseness which is one of the chief beauties of the original, and in preserving which, I trust I have not fallen into the errors of abruptness or obscurity.

In conclusion, though I am far from being one of those who

“Think themselves authors when they’ve wrote
A prologue, preface, or a note;”

I humbly hope that my author has not

suffered much at my hands, and that I may not have unwittingly numbered myself amongst that class of translators, who according to Fable VI :

“ hapless wits !

Turn, by their version, swords to spits.”

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PROLOGUE.

THE ELEPHANT AND OTHER ANIMALS.

IN those long-vanished ages, when,
Beyond the memory of men,
In lands now nameless and unknown
The brutes had empires all their own,
And still possessed, if tales say true,
The powers of thought and language too,
The elephant was grieved to see
His brethren's immorality,
And, with enthusiasm warm,
Resolved to bring about reform ;
Full of this laudable intention,
He called forthwith a great convention.

Soon as his audience reached the ground,
 First bowing courteously around,
 He stood with downcast eyes awhile,
 Then waved his trunk in graceful style,
 And, in a speech prepared by heart,
 Began to play the censor's part.
 For near an hour he stood declaiming,
 With all the strength of virtue, blaming
 The faults and follies which, by stealth,
 Had crept within the commonwealth.
 In language stern, and tone unawed,
 He spoke of murder, rapine, fraud—
 Malicious envy — baneful sloth —
 He forcibly denounced them both,
 And haughty ignorance, and spleen,
 Did not escape his satire keen ;
 Lastly, by way of peroration,
 He lashed conceit and affectation.

With ears and mouths extended wide,
 Seeming much pleased and edified,
 Some of his congregation heard,
 With eagerness, his ev'ry word.
 The gentle lamb, th' industrious bee,
 The pointer, famed for loyalty,—

The faithful dove, with modest eye,
The unassuming butterfly,
The frugal ant, the noble horse,
The skilful linnet,—owned the force
With which he marked the guilty's ways,
And proved their feelings by their praise.

But not from all the listeners round,
His strictures such reception found ;
For, many, mortally offended,
Scarce waiting till his speech had ended,
With loud and fierce invective, bore
Against the hapless orator :
The robber wolf, the coward cur,
Growled on the wise philosopher ;
The tiger gnashed his teeth upon him,
The serpent spat his venom on him ;
The wasp, the hornet, and the drone,
Abused him in a lower tone ;
The caterpillar left the place,
And close behind, with haughty pace,
The locust stalked, in aspect grim —
His friend the snail crawled after him ;
The weasel vowed he could not stay,
For he had business that day ;

The fox remained to try his wit,
 A most consummate hypocrite,
 With one eye on the speaker turned,
 Seeming attentive and concerned,
 With th'other winking on the ape,
 Who, letting not a word escape,
 By mimickry, and joke, and pun,
 Turned the most solemn parts to fun.

The elephant observed all this,
 And cool and calm, 'midst growl and hiss,
 Having with wondrous patience waited,
 Cried, when the clamour had abated :
 " My masters all, I here protest,
 The censures which I late expressed,
 And which such rude return have won,
 Were meant for all, and yet for none.
 They, therefore, who my words condemn,
 Seem to confess they merit them,
 And, if convicted, they must see,
 'Tis by themselves, and not by me."

Readers — my fables, be it known,
 Are not addressed to you, alone,
 (For all the world may justly claim
 To share their moral, and their blame,)

Nor only to the present times ;
For literary faults, and crimes,
Such as obtain their censure free,
Have ever been, will ever be.
Here, then, I openly disclaim
All personal and private aim.
If any, notwithstanding, will
Take a mere general lesson ill,
Because it suits himself,—I say,
Let him digest it as he may.



THE SILKWORM AND THE SPIDER.

THE spider, with a scornful smile,
Weaving with fury all the while,
Thus to the modest silkworm said,
Who calmly spun her precious thread :
“ Pray, my slow sister, what d’ye say
To this, my web, begun to-day,

Which, now, just finished, decks my cell :
Don't it look delicate, and well ?”

“ It does look well, and that is all.”
The silkworm answered from her ball.



THE FLINT AND THE STEEL.

THE flint, with language, harsh and high,
Accused the steel of cruelty,
In striking her with all his might,
Whene'er he wanted fire and light.
The steel the imputation spurned,
And, with such warmth the contest burned,
That both, at last, agreed to slip
Their contract of companionship.
“ Good bye, then, madam,” said the one ;
“ And, since my company you shun,
And to continue with me doubt,
We'll see what use you are, without.”
“ About as much as you will be,
Good sir,” she answered, “ without me.”

Writers, revolve this tale of mine,
Nor think it needless to combine
With powers naturally strong,
The help of study, close and long.
Does not this fable true reveal,
The flint shines not without the steel?
No more can talent without art,
For both are useless when apart.



THE SWAN AND THE LINNET.

PIQUED at the linnet's song, one day,
The swan exclaimed:—"Leave off! I say--
Be still, you little noisy thing!
What—dare *you* challenge me to sing,
When there 's no voice, however fine,
Can match the melody of mine?
(The linnet warbled on)—D'ye hear?
This impudence may cost you dear;
I could with one harmonious note
For ever stop your squeaking throat,

And, if I do not choose to try,
Respect my magnanimity."

"I wish," at length the linnet said,
"I wish, to Heaven, the proof were made ;
You can't imagine how I long
To hear that rich and flowing song,
Which, though so sweet, by fame averred,
I know not who has ever heard."

The swan essayed to sing, but—whew !
She screeched and squalled a note or two,
Until the linnet, it appears,
Took to her wings to save her ears.

'Tis strange when some of learned fame
Will prove their title to the name,
How oft the ill-placed praise they mar,
And show how ignorant they are.



THE TEA AND THE SAGE.

THE tea, from China on her way,
Met in some sea, or gulf, or bay,—

(Would to her log I might refer !)
The sage, who thus accosted her :
“ Sister, — ahoy ! ho ! whither bound ? ”
“ I leave,” she said, “ my native ground,
For Europe’s markets, where, I’m told,
They purchase me by weight of gold.”
“ And I,” the sage returned, “ am seeking
The route to Canton, or to Peking ;
Your Chinese use me largely, in
Their cookery and medicine ;
They know my virtues, nor deny
The price I ask, however high,
While Europe scorns me, just, indeed,
As if I was the vilest weed.
Go : and good luck t’ ye ; know full well
That you are sure enough to sell,
For nations all, (fools that they are !)
Value whatever comes from far,
And give their money, nothing loth,
For anything of foreign growth.”

I humbly ask the sage’s pardon,
(His race is honoured in my garden)
The sneer parenthetical he made
Attacks the very life of trade ;

But had his satire been designed
For trade of literary kind,
I had completely acquiesced
In all the censure it expressed.
How frequently, alas ! we meet
Men who can readily repeat
Whole poems in a foreign tongue,
That Boileau wrote, or Tasso sung,
Yet scarcely know what land may claim
The honour of a Spenser's name.

THE SWORD AND THE SPIT.

A sword, the most distinguished blade,
That e'er Toledan cutler made,
Well tempered, polished, keen and bright,
Had served in many a famous fight ;
From chief to chief -- from sire to son --
Still for its owner fame had won,
And oft its edge in deadliest fray
Had turned the chances of the day.

At length, (alas ! such fortune clings
Ever to sublunary things,)
Oft bought, and sold, and changed, it passed
From hand to hand, until at last,
By some strange chance, t'was placed within
The dirty garret of an inn,
There, amongst vilest lumber thrust,
A helpless prey to damp and rust.

Thus idle and forgot it lay,
Until the cookmaid came one day,
Seized the proud pommel in her hand,
('Twas by the foolish host's command,
No doubt, a dull and senseless clown,) .
Then to her kitchen going down,
Transfixed upon the once famed steel,
A capon for a traveller's meal ;
And lo ! a common spit it yields,
The falchion of a thousand fields !

A certain boorish cavalier,
Whose fame and pedigree, I fear,
Were not of most distinguished sort,
It chanced just then had come to court,
Who, wishing, with a seemly pride,
To have a rapier at his side,

Strait to a famous cutler went
To buy the gay accoutrement.
The cutler, who was well aware
That few such dangerous weapons bear,
(So peaceful are our manners grown,)
For aught save ornament alone,
And, so the hilt and sheath agree,
No matter what the blade may be,
Resolved a goodly gain to earn,
And begged next day he would return ;
Then, going to his scullery, took
A rusted spit from off a hook,
And what with cleaning—grinding—whetting—
And to the blade a pommel setting,
With golden guard, and scabbard bright,
He sold it to the simple knight,
Vowing it was the noblest brand,
E'er wrought by famed Ferrara's hand.

And now — the cutler or the host—
Which one deserves our censure most ?
Or may we not thus shortly rule ;
The one was knave—the other fool ?
And these same admirable natures
Form the two kinds of bad translators.

Some take illustrious works, that stand
Distinguished in their native land,
And, by their version, (hapless wits !)
Turn, like the landlord, swords to spits—
Whilst others, like the cutler, dress
The refuse of the foreign press,
In all the glitter art affords,
And sell the vilest spits for swords.

THE DUCK AND THE SERPENT.

A self-conceited duck, one day,
Was waddling from her pond away :
“ What other race can boast,” she cried,
“ The many gifts to our’s allied ?
Earth — water — air — are all for us,
When I am tired of walking thus,
I fly, if so I take the whim,
Or if it pleases me I swim.”
A cunning serpent overheard
The boasting of the clumsy bird,
And, with contempt and scorn inflamed
Came hissing up, and thus exclaimed :

“ It strikes me, ma’am, there’s small occasion
For your just uttered proclamation ;
These gifts of yours shine rather dim,
Since, neither like the trout you swim,
Nor, like the deer, step swift and light,
Nor match the eagle in your flight.”

They err who think that merit clings
To knowledge slight of many things ;
He who his fellows would excel,
Whate’er he does should do it well.

THE MUFF, THE FAN, AND THE PARASOL.

It sounds presumptuous and ill
To boast of universal skill,
But ’tis a scarce less fault, I own,
To serve one sort of use alone.

An idle parasol, one day,
Within a lady’s chamber lay,
And having nothing else to do,
Addressing his companions two,

Reclining near, a muff and fan,
He thus insultingly began,
Using that form of dialect,
In which, if Æsop is correct,
The brass and earthen jars, of old,
Conversed as down the stream they rolled.
“ Oh ! sirs, ye merit mighty praise !
You, muff, may do for wintry days,
A corner is your lot in spring ;
While you, fan, are an useless thing,
When cold succeeds to heat, for neither
Can change yourselves to suit the weather.
Learn, if you’re able, to possess,
Like me, a double usefulness,
For winter’s rain I help to shun
And guard in summer from the sun.”

THE MOLE AND OTHER ANIMALS.

SOME merry quadrupeds, one day,
Had met in sportive mood, to play

(A rare diversion sure enough,
 At a snug game of blind-man's buff.
 A rat, a squirrel, and a hare,
 Companions in the frolic were :
 A puppy and a fox, made five,
 And he who kept the game alive,
 By jeer and gibe, and turns and tricks,
 Our worthy monkey friend, made six,
 Who, as the readiest with the hand,
 Had volunteered their eyes to band.

A mole, who heard the noise, crept out,
 To learn what it was all about,
 And, when she understood the fun,
 " By Jove !" she said, " but I'll make one."
 So, with some trouble, groped her way,
 And begged for leave to join their play.

The monkey welcomed her, and vowed
 They felt delighted, happy, proud ;
 With other sayings of the sort,
 Knowing she'd make them famous sport.
 And so, indeed, the sequel proved,
 She stumbled every step she moved ;
 Her eyes being buried deeply in,
 And covered with a sort of skin.

So almost ere the game began,
Against a clod of earth she ran,
And falling flat upon her nose,
We may with certainty suppose
They did not let the occasion slip,
Of seizing on her ladyship.

Now, by the custom of the game,
She, being caught, the buff became ;
And who, by nature or by art,
Could be more fitted for the part ?
But, as the charge she undertook,
To give the thing a better look,
She cried : “ Why this delay ? time flies :
Sir Monkey, will you bind my eyes ? ”

If he who's blind, and knows it, too,
Pretends he sees with vision true,
We need not wonder, if we find
The same, in blindness of the mind ;
Nor doubt that never-failing rule,
That none e'er owns himself a fool.

THE TWO PARROTS.

A LADY from Mauritius brought
Two parrots, who, it chanced, were caught
In different quarters of the isle,
And spoke a different tongue and style :
For as the land divided lies
'Twixt French and English colonies,
It was no wonder that each bird
Should speak the language he had heard.
Thus, jabbering on in either tongue,
In the verandah as they hung,
They made it soon a second Babel ;
Talking as fast as they were able,
In French and English mixed together,
Till it was really doubtful, whether
Ere long, they had not quite forgot
Which was their own, and which was not,
Had not the dame their music thwarted,
By having the companions parted.

The French philosopher soon spurned
The little English he had learned ;
And, ere a dozen days were o'er,
Conversed as purely as before.
Not so, the English Parrot thought ;
The gallicisms he had caught
He as an ornament regarded,
With which his speech he interlarded.
It chanced, one day, he grumbling stood,
Because they gave him beans for food :
“ *Peste* on these seeds, *de mauvaises mines*,
I'm not *au fait* at eating beans,
The *prestige*, once my sure defence
Against such *bétise* negligence,
Has vanished, and *un je ne sais quoi*
Of meanness seems my keeper's law.”

A cunning monkey, who was near,
And chanced this jargon to o'erhear,
With a most ludicrous grimace
Here burst out laughing in his face.
“ Ho ! ho ! ” exclaimed the angry bird,
Not doubting with a single word
The monkey's mouth with shame to close,
“ Sir, you're a purist I suppose ? ”

“ I am, indeed,” the other cried,
“ And bear the name with joy and pride.”
Transform these animals to men
Would not the tale be better then ?



THE BEE AND THE DRONES.

ONCE on a time, in summer weather,
The drones had met in swarms together,
A weighty matter to debate
Touching their long degraded state,
And, by all ways and means, contriving
To hide the slothful way of living,
For which their race so long had borne
Their fellow-creatures' hate and scorn.
To gain this much desired end,
E'en the most worthless swore to mend,
And labour while the days were sunny
To fill the stores with wax and honey.
But then — hard work was so unpleasant !
And having neither talent present,

Nor yet experience of the past
To help their efforts, they at last
Discovered that their hopes were vain
In such a way their aim to gain,
And strove an easier plan to shape,
From this dilemma to escape.

There lay beneath a ruined hive
A dead bee's bones, who, while alive
Had by his industry and art
Won a proud place in glory's chart.
There going, and with mighty pains
Gathering th' illustrious remains,
They praised his genius to the skies,
Paid him the grandest obsequies,
And o'er his tomb began to hum
A lofty toned eulogium.
What noble qualities adorned
The brother whose decease they mourned !
How white the wax his cells displayed !
How sweet the honey he had made !
Proud of the work, so loud and long
The chorus buzzed the funeral song,
That a stout bee who laboured near
Felt much annoyed the din to hear,

And, with indignant ire inflamed,
Came flying up and thus exclaimed :
“ What ! — after all your proclamation,
Is this the only consummation
Of such a precious undertaking ?
One drop of honey of my making
Is worth a thousand times the hue
And humming of such things as you.”

Of drone-like mortals, never known
For wit or wisdom of their own,
How many in all times and ages
Have thought to pass for wits and sages,
By praises in ecstatic tone
On wits and sages dead and gone,
And how triumphantly they quote
Whatever such men said or wrote ;
But, if their raptures are sincere,
Just let me whisper in their ear
A proof of that they well might raise,
By imitating those they praise.

THE SHOWMAN'S MONKEY.

A WORTHY friar, (alas ! with shame
 I own I have forgot his name,)

Who racked his brain for pompous words
 To write the lives of beasts and birds,
 Who, upon lofty measures borne,
 Describes the ne'er seen unicorn —
 Who saw an aged phoenix wane —
 Ignite — and burn to youth again —
 And whom a thousand things befel,
 Which here I have not space to tell,
 Narrates (at least it so is said,
 For I his works have never read,)

A certain monkey's exhibition
 Which will, I think, bear repetition.

This monkey, who, the story says,
 Had many pleasant tricks and ways,
 And served a conjuror, one of those
 Who gain applause at fairs and shows,
 One day, his master being out,
 Thought to enjoy himself, no doubt,

And asked his friends, a chosen few,
His best performances to view.

First, he displayed his great command
Of mimicry and slight-of-hand,
Next on the slackened cord he swung,
Then on the tight-rope danced and sprung
With fearful somerset and leap,
As if his neck he valued cheap ;
Of this howe'er, he made but light,
Resolving to conclude the night
And finish with *éclat* the play,
As always was his master's way,
With the most splendid of his means —
The magic-lantern's wondrous scenes.

First, then, attention to request,
A brief exordium he address'd,
Well decked with elocutional graces,
As is the custom in such cases ;
Then stood behind the said machine,
And, as he pass'd the slips between,
(The slips composed of painted glass
Contrived within a groove to pass,)
He, in well-turned and flowery speech,
Explained the scenes contained in each.

Now, as was needful for the show,
The room was darkened, and although
Straining their eyes, the audience all
Gazed with attention on the wall,
None the protentious forms could see
Which, with such grave solemnity,
In words from rhetoric's fount imbibed,
The sage exhibitor described.
Puzzled at first, they grew offended,
Thinking an insult was intended,
And, as indignantly they rose,
How things had ended Heaven knows !
When, in the thickest of the din,
The master, luckily, came in,
And having heard the whole affair,
With half severe, half smiling air,
" Idiot ! " he cried, — " pray, what effect
Could you from all your words expect,
When, by your stupid oversight,
The lantern is without a light ? "

Ye geniuses refined and pure,
Who take such pains to be obscure,
Can you in better way be taught
That without clearness all is nought ?

THE BEAR, THE MONKEY, AND THE FIG.

A BEAR, with whom a Piedmontese
 Had voyaged from the Polar seas,
 And by whose strange unweildy gambols
 He earned a living in his rambles,
 One day, upon his hind-legs set,
 Began to dance a minuet.
 At length, being tired, as well he might,
 Of standing such a time upright,
 He to a monkey near advancing,
 Exclaimed : " What think you of my dancing ?"
 " Really," he said, " ahem ! (I'm sure
 This monkey was a connoisseur,
 To praise it, I 'd indeed be glad,
 Only it is so very bad !"
 " How !" cried the bear, not over pleased,
 " Surely, your judgment is diseased,
 Or else you cannot well have seen
 My elegance of step and mien ;

Just look again, and say what graces
You think are wanting in my paces."

" Indeed, his taste is quite amazing,"

Replied a pig, with rapture gazing ;

" Bravo ! encore ! well done ! Sir Bear,

By heaven, you trip as light as air ;

I vow that Paris never knew

A dancer, half so fine as you."

With some confusion, Bruin heard

Such praises by a pig conferred ;

He communed with himself awhile,

And muttered thus, in altered style :

" I must confess the monkey's blame

Made me feel doubtful of my fame ;

But since the pigs their praise concede,

My dancing must be bad, indeed !"

Form, if you can, a judgment true,

Authors, on those who judge of you :

A wise man's blame may make one sad,

But a fool's praise is twice as bad.

THE BEAU AND THE PEWTER BUCKLES.

A DASHING beau, whose high renown
 In Paris, filled the court and town :
 Who reigned the arbiter supreme,
 Of fashion's law, and taste's regime ;
 Who wore his fifty suits a year,
 And in profusion had no peer,
 In short, who led the Paris ton,—
 One day, put pewter buckles on,
 Wishing to try, in such a way,
 If firmly fixed his honours lay.

Well, thus attired, he sallied out,—
 I know not whether ball, or rout,
 Was given that night, to celebrate
 The splendours of a royal fête :
 Be what it might, the gay, the fair,
 The noble, and monsieur were there.
 Soon as the new conceit was spied,
 Applauses rung on ev'ry side :
 " The brilliant metal ! how it shines ;
 Brighter than Peru's silver mines !

Long may our court of France be graced,
By such a master-mind of taste !”

And let a famous author fill
A book with all the trash he will,
And I'll consent to be impaled,
If it is not with raptures hailed.



THE GREAT, AND THE SMALL BELL.

IN a cathedral tower, there hung
A mighty sounding bell, that rung
On high and solemn days alone,
In slowest time, and deepest tone :
Nor did its tolling ever go
Beyond a dozen strokes, or so ;
For this, and for its size and sound,
Its fame had spread the country round.

Now, in the city's bounds, was rated,
A hamlet, thinly populated,
With a poor church, decayed by age,
And belfry like an hermitage,

A small cracked bell, performing there .
 The most important character.
 The villagers, who wished to claim
 For their small bell the great one's fame,
 Resolved the cracked and tinkling thing
 Should likewise slow, and seldom ring,
 Till, with the country folks, at last,
 The small bell for a great one passed !

Likely enough, grave looks alone
 Oft veil a fool, and many a one
 Scarce deigns to unclothe his lips, and tries
 In such a way, to ape the wise.



THE SPORTSMAN AND THE FERRET.

WEARY and weak with heat and toil,
 And laden with a heavy spoil,
 After a long and tedious roam,
 A sportsman was returning home.

The village just appeared in view,
 To which, as joyfully he drew,

He overtook a friend and neighbour,
Proceeding from his daily labour,
And, as they chatted on the way,
Told him the fortunes of the day.
“ I ’ve toiled until I ’m almost dead,
But what of that, my friend ?” he said ;
“ Old as I am at snare and net,
Such sport as I this day have met
I ne’er before had luck to obtain,
And, may-be, never shall again.
Though since the dawn of day begun,
I’ve suffered from a broiling sun,
But then, a good return I bring ;
Look at these rabbits, here’s a string !
I say, and I will say again,
Fearless of being reckoned vain,
That, not in fifty miles around,
So good a sportsman can be found.”

A ferret, slung behind, had heard
The rabbit-catcher’s ev’ry word,
And, with his sharply pointed snout,
Above the bag, just peeping out,
He cried : “ Your worship’s leave, I pray,
Be pleased to pardon what I say ;

Why do you thus your talents boast ?
 Surely 't was I who worked the most.
 Those rabbits you so proudly show,
 Who hunted them, I'd like to know ?
 I, to be sure,—I caught them all ;
 And yet are my deserts so small,
 That e'en to speak of them, you shun ?
 Methinks, the least you could have done,
 Had been to make my labours known,
 While thus exulting in your own."

Some naturally may suppose,
 That, ere the ferret made a close,
 The man confessed his paltry deed,
 And blushed for shame ;—not he, indeed !
 He stood as careless and serene,
 As writers, pitiful and mean,
 Regardless of all moral law,
 Who from the works of others draw,
 And yet, to their eternal shame,
 Ne'er give their benefactor's name.

THE MOUSE AND THE CAT.

THAT Æsop had a brilliant brain ;
 How rich his moralising strain !
 What life-drawn incidents we note,
 What happy wit in all he wrote !
 Perhaps 'twill be no mispent time,
 To put a tale of his in rhyme.

“ Yes,” said a sapient mouse, one day,
 “ Whate’er philosophers may say,
 Fidelity must be confessed,
 To be of all the virtues best :
 And ’t is because his faith I know,
 I love the honest spaniel so.”

“ Ay,” cried a cat, “ most true — most true ;
 But I possess that virtue too.”

“ You do indeed ! if that’s the case,
 (Slinking within his hiding place,
 And then, with caution peeping out,
 And turning up in scorn his snout,)
 My admiration passes by —
 It is a worthless quality.”

The attributes, which many deem
The very best of virtues, seem
To sink to vices, when they grow
Within the bosom of a foe.

And now, Sir Reader, may I ask,
If I have well performed my task ?
How does the fable meet your views,
Does it instruct you, and amuse ?
“ It does indeed, throughout I find
The marks of Æsop’s mighty mind.”
Indeed ! I am glad you do not slight it,
The more, as Æsop did not write it :
Within my humble head it grew.
“ The fable, then, is yours ?” ’Tis true :
And since, as his, it seemed so fine,
Pray criticise it now, as mine.

THE OX AND THE BEETLE.

A BEETLE once, a paltry worm,
Whose mind was smaller than her form,

Called to the ox, who, strong to toil,
Was ploughing up the stubborn soil :
“ Dear me !” she cried, in accents shrill,
“ Sure that’s a pretty proof of skill !
Shame on you, not to know your trade,
See what a crooked ridge you ’ve made.”
The ox, amazed, turned gravely round,
And looking closely on the ground,
“ Ho ! ho ! Ma’am Beetle, is it you !”
He answered, — “ and turned critic too ?
Do for the future hold your tongue ;
Suppose that furrow to be wrong,
Could you have seen the error slight,
If all the rest had not been right ?
My master, in a work like this,
Forgives the little done amiss.”

Look at the accuser, and the accused,
The ox by vilest grub abused !
And can I think that those will fail
To see the moral of my tale,
Whose vision, meanly circumspect,
Sees in great works a small defect ?

THE FROG AND THE HEN.

A FROG, as floundering he lay,
 Within his native ditch, one day,
 Felt mightily annoyed, to hear
 The cackling from a hen-roost near,
 And hopping straightway to her nest,
 He thus the worthy bird addressed :
 " How now ! good madam, is it you ?
 Believe me, then, I deeply rue,
 That fate has doomed me to the labour
 Of having such a noisy neighbour :
 And after all this cry and chatter,
 Pray will you tell me what's the matter ?"
 " I've laid an egg," the hen replied,
 " And now announce it far and wide."
 " Only an egg ! and is that all ?
 A pretty cause to boast and bawl !"
 " Only an egg : — but, worthy sir,
 Why 'gainst my voice make such a stir ?
 Since, (so my patient mind endures,)
 I never have complained of your's,

Though sometimes with disgust I'm choking,
To hear your everlasting croaking.
And if I publish what I do,
I know it is of use ; but you,
A worthless, useless, bloated breed,
Might hold your ugly tongues, indeed."

THE TWO RABBITS.

As, pressed by dogs, o'er hill and heath
A rabbit scampered out of breath ;
A friend, as he his burrow passed,
Stopped him, and cried, "Ho ! why so fast ?"
"So fast, indeed ! and where's the wonder ?
See those two scoundrel greyhounds yonder."
"Ha ! here they come, that's sure, — but stay —
They are not hounds." — "What then, I pray ?"
"Setters — if well my eyes descry 'em."
"Setters ! about as much as I am.
They're hounds I know, and will not doubt it."
"They're setters, — you know nought about it."

“They’re hounds — upon my soul, they are !”

“I say they’re setters still.”—Thus far

The contest on the point had gone,

When the two hungry dogs came on,

Seized on our rabbits, roused too late,

And quickly settled the debate.

They who neglect important things

For vain and captious cavillings,

Let them to this example turn,

Think on the rabbits’ fate, and learn.



THE AUTHOR AND THE RAT.

UP to a learned person’s chamber,

A rat somehow contrived to clamber,

A cursed rat — who took delight

In an uncommon appetite ;

Ne’er, like his whiskered friends, he dined

On candles, cheese, or bacon rind,

He could not fancy ‘ autre chose’

Than the poor author’s verse and prose.

A monstrous cat's incessant watch
Was all in vain the thief to catch,
Nor rat-traps of all shapes and sizes,
Nor arsenic in sweet disguises
Could cure the creature's inclination
For literary devastation,
For gnawing works admired by sages,
And making sieves of scores of pages.

The author, in this dire distress,
Sent prose and poetry to press ;
But if before the noxious beast
On manuscript had made a feast,
It soon appeared that printed letter
Suited his palate even better.
“ Was ever man so plagued before ? ”
The victim cried, “ I'll write no more,
To have my works thus gnawed to pieces.
Here, then, my luckless labour ceases,
And henceforth will I never place
Aught but blank paper in my case.”
Alas ! the hateful vermin still
Devoured e'en that with right good-will.

Our writer's temper grew morose,
So, mixing a sufficient dose,

He in the common ink he used
Corrosive sublimate infused ;
Then wrote again, I know not what —
Or verse or prose — it matters not :
The Rat once more to eat begun,
And burst ere half his meal was done.

A good receipt — let authors bear
With criticisms just and fair,
But when malignant censors loose
Their indiscriminate abuse,
Not to reply in terms severe
Shows little judgement, or much fear.
And let those too, whose only care
Is to devour and gnaw, beware, —
Lest, some day, unawares they drink,
Like this stout rat, corrosive ink.



THE MUSICAL ASS.

AN ass, with leisure step, one day,
Through the green meadows took his way ;

An epicure he was, no doubt,
And, as he wandered, looked about
With something like a hope to find
A salad of the thistle kind.
Thus straying on, the pensive brute
Found, lying in his path, a flute,
An instrument of fashion fair ;
Some careless swain had dropped it there.
Now, what it was, he could not tell ;
So, as he stooped his head to smell,
And rested on the mouth his chin,
He breathed by accident within,
And lo ! a most melodious sound
Was echoed in the air around.
“ Dear me ! ” the ass was heard to say,
“ How very charmingly I play !
And yet how many may we find
Who blame the music of our kind.”

’Tis thus the dullest dolts of men
If they’re successful now and then,
Place it to talents of their own,
And not to merest chance alone.

THE DROMEDARY AND THE OSTRICH.

A CLUB of animals, one day,
 Had met to pass the time away
 (For brutes too have their clubs and cronies)
 In learned conversaziones.

Their fellow-creatures' parts and worth
 Gave to a long discussion birth ;
 Some praised the structure of the bee,
 Others the dog's fidelity ;
 Some liked the ant, and not a few
 Admired the parrot's voice and hue.

"For me," the ostrich said, "I call
 The dromedary first of all :"

"And," cried the dromedary, "ne'er,
 A nobler than the ostrich there,
 Within the animal dominion,
 E'er raised a paw or waved a pinion."

What were the motives none could deem,
 For this reciprocal esteem :
 Was it that nature both bedecks
 With bulky forms and lengthy necks ?

Or because stupid is the one,
And th'other not with sense o'erdone ?
Because they're ugly both — no question ?
Or because both have good digestion ?
Or because — “No,” the fox exclaimed,
“The reason has not yet been named ;
I penetrate their views in raising
This basely mutual be-praising ;
My friends, the illustrious ‘fratrum par’
Of the same country natives are.”

Both were in fact of Moorish breed,
And so the fox guessed well indeed.
I, too, amongst our literaries,
Know ostriches and dromedaries,
Who echo one another's fame,
From motives pretty much the same.



THE ANT AND THE FLEA.

SOME persons have a way of claiming
All knowledge that is worth the naming,

Men, who, whate'er they hear and see,
However new and rare it be,
Meet it with some contemptuous phrasing,
To spare themselves the pain of praising.
Now, by the life of me ! this class
Shall not from my inspection pass
Without a fable with them taking,
Although it be a day in making.

An ant once told the flea, her neighbour,
The effects of all her skill and labour ;
Described the structure of her dwelling,
Explaining every part, and telling
The uses of each separate story —
The granary — the dormitory —
Shewed with what ease they store the spoil
By due division of the toil,
With other things, which feigned or fabled
Might seem, if we were not enabled,
By study and experience due,
To know and hold them all as true.

The flea, to all this information
Vouchsafed no other observation,
Than sentences like these — ha, — so, —
I understand, — of course, — I know, —

No doubt, — 'tis clear, — quite obvious that —
I don't see much to wonder at.

“Then,” said the ant, “I wish, my friend,
That you would so far condescend,
As for our help to let us see
A proof of your proficiency ;
You speak in such a master-tone,
T'would be no sooner said than done.”
The flea, with impudence ashamed,
Cut a light caper, and exclaimed :
“Surely you do not mean to doubt
My skill to work such trifles out ;
'Tis but to apply oneself, — but stay —
I am busy now — another day.”

THE PELLITORY AND THE THYME.

I've read, but where, I cannot say,
That, in the herbal tongue, one day,
The pellitory, thinking fit
Upon the thyme to try her wit,

Accosted him, and then began
Her speech on this malicious plan :
“ God help thee thyme ! it grieves my soul,
That thou, the sweetest of the whole
Sweet-smelling tribes that bloom around
Art scarce three inches from the ground.”
“ Fair one,” he answered, “ I confess
That I am small ; but ne’ertheless
Remember that I grow alone,
Without the help of any one,
While you, my dear, can’t grow at all
Unless you cling fast to a wall.”

When, on all sides, I see upspringing,
Men, who, to other writers clinging,
Think themselves authors, when they’ve wrote
A prologue, preface, or a note,
I feel a mighty inclination
To apply to them the thyme’s oration.

THE MAGISTRATE AND THE ROBBER.

It happened, once upon a time,
A robber, stained with every crime,
Was taken in the very act
As a poor traveller he attacked.

“Unhappy wretch!” the judge began,
Whose place it was to try the man,
“Hast thou no sorrow for thy guilt —
No horror for the blood thou’st spilt?”

“Not I, my lord,” the culprit cried,
“I think of all my deeds with pride ;
For, from my birth, as I may say,
I’ve been a sinner in some way ;
E’en in my childhood’s earliest part,
I gave some signs of future art,—
Stole cloaks and watches—swords and rings—
Wrenched locks, scaled walls, and such like things,
Till what I now am, I became —
A robber of unrivalled name ;
So that your worship surely doats,
To wonder at my cutting throats !

And, let me say, I think it hard
Thus from my trade to be debarred,
(Merely to calm some persons' fears,)
A trade I've followed forty years.

If this assassin's boast we blame,
Do not those authors say the same,
Who gloss their faults with this excuse,
That they are sanctified by use—
Opposing such a poor pretence
To all the laws of taste and sense.

THE BEE AND THE CUCKOO.

A CUCKOO, near a hive, one day,
Was chaunting in his usual way,
When to the door the queen-bee ran,
And, humming angrily, began :
“ Do cease that tuneless song I hear,—
How can we work while thou art near ?
There is no other bird, I vow,
Half so fantastical as thou,

Since all that ugly voice can do,
Is to sing on—cuckoo ! cuckoo !”

“ If my monotony of song
Displeases you, shall I be wrong,”
The cuckoo answered, “ if I find
Your comb as little to my mind ?
Look at the cells—through every one
Does not unvaried sameness run ?
Then if in me there’s nothing new,
God knows, all’s old enough in you.”

The bee replied—“ Hear me, my friend,
In works that have an useful end,
It is not always worth the while
To seek variety in style,
But if those works whose only views
Are to give pleasure and amuse,
Want either fancy or invention,
They fail of gaining their intention.”

THE CAT AND THE LIZARD.

SOME animals are scientific
 In use of nostrum and specific,
 Know how, by vegetable suction
 To assist th'organical construction ;
 And as for skill in things botanical,
 No obstacle their art can manacle,—
 They'll tell each plant's remedial nature,
 And, in the herbal nomenclature,
 Will class narcotics—diuretics—
 Cathartics—styptics—and emetics—
 With febrifuges—and prolifics—
 Cephalics too—and sudorifics.

A certain cat, I've heard narrated,
 Who in this branch had graduated,
 Who was both theorist and practitioner,
 And an amazing rhetorician,
 Using of words an architecture,
 Worthy a sage professor's lecture,
 Once to a shrewd old lizard crept,
 Who for dried herbs a warehouse kept,

And cried, " Ah me ! these pangs mortiferous !
I want some simples salutiferous ;
To ease these turgencies hydropical
I'll chew some juices heliotropical."

The lizard heard his patient ramble
Through this ineffable preamble,
But, dazzled by the coruscation
From such a brilliant declamation,
No more to guess the sense was able
Than if he'd spoke in tongue of Babel ;
And knew not what to say or do,—
Until the cat impatient grew,
Upon some leaves of sun-flowers fell,
And with them filled his ventricle.
The lizard watched him for a while,
And then, with something like a smile,
" Ho ! ho !" he cried, " my lord hydropical,
So those are juices heliotropical !"

And shall we wonder, when we hear
That a poor cricket, who was near,
The macaronic diction heard,
Nor understood a single word,
Yet raised in ecstasy her eyes,
And praised the doctor to the skies.

No wonder is it,—I could name
Many who think and act the same,
And ever ready to revile
A plain and smoothly flowing style ;
Since, then, this worthy class prefers
Such hyperbolic metaphors,
With diabolical digressions,
And unpronounceable expressions,
With which they ever make invasion,
Careless what nonsense they occasion :
This tale euphonious and mystic,
Must win their notice eulogistic.



THE LACE-MAKERS.

A manufacturer, who made
The gold and silver lace his trade,
Had for his very next door neighbour,
A woman whose incessant labour
Was working lace of Brussels kind,
For ladies' ornament designed.

“How strange it is,” he once exclaimed,
“That of the flimsy stuff you’ve framed,
Two yards a greater sum obtain
Than ten of mine will ever gain ;
And most unjustly are they sold,
For your’s is flax and mine is gold.”
“Good sir,” she cried, “you need not wonder,
That lace like mine should keep your’s under,
For though, as you have justly told,
I work in flax and you in gold,
This will but stronger proof impart
How much material yields to art.”

Ye who neglect as mean and vile
The help and ornament of style,
And an unmixed devotion own
To matter and ideas alone ;
Observe, that if the thread despised
Above e’en gold itself is prized,
’Tis because elegance and skill
Can change all things to what they will.

THE LION AND THE EAGLE.

THE lion and the eagle met
 In solemn conference, to set
 Some matters right, that crossed the intents
 Of their respective governments.
 Against the bat, the eagle laid
 A long and heavy charge, and said :
 “ Why should this nondescript create
 Misunderstandings in the state ?
 Oft ’midst my subjects he has come,
 And claimed as if by right a home,
 A thousand arguments he brings,
 And, above all, he shews his wings;
 But, when he chooses, thus he’ll speak :
 ‘ Mine is a snout, and not a beak,
 And if you dare for any cause
 To make me subject to your laws,
 Then be the peril on your head —
 For, look you, I’m a quadruped.’
 When ’mongst my vassals, he’ll complain
 Of the excesses of your reign,

And when with you he lives, he showers
All sorts of calumnies on our ours."

"'Tis well," the lion said, "I swear
He never more shall breathe the air
Of my dominions," — "Nor of mine,
I vow by all my royal line."

Since then, an exiled outcast grown,
We see the bat by night alone ;
For neither quadruped nor bird,
Will now with such a comrade herd.

Ye literary bats ! who strive
Deceiving all, with all to live,
To wear the hide, and feather too —
This fable I inscribe to you.

THE CRIPPLES.

A MAN, by nature, deaf and dumb,
Once to a blind friend's house had come,
To talk some private business over,
Though what, I never could discover.

He who was blind, his thoughts expressed
By signs which th' other quickly guessed ;
But when he made the same endeavour,
The blind man was as wise as ever.
While thus perplexingly involved
In this dilemma, they resolved
To seek a mutual friend of both, —
A worthy man he was in troth,
But sadly maimed, in some hot fray
His right hand had been shot away.
What one by signs and gestures said
He into words interpreted,
Forming a ready medium
Between the blind man and the dumb.

Thus for some time, with pro and con,
The curious trialogue went on,
Till they determined 'twould be better
To settle the affair by letter.
“ I'm sorry, sirs,” exclaimed the friend,
“ That my poor powers will not extend
To write the letter you demand,
Seeing I've lost my writing hand.
But fair and softly, let me see,
Suppose we ask the Dominic ?

Let some one to his dwelling go
He'll come full readily I know."
" Brother, how thoughtlessly you talk !
How should he come who cannot walk ?"
The man who could not see exclaimed,
" You know how dreadfully he's lamed.
'Twould be by far the better way,
For us to go to him, I say."
And so they did, and in the end,
He who was lame the letter penned,
The blind man and the maimed together,
Dictated, as he plied the feather,
And the dumb comrade was elected,
To leave the epistle as directed.

Now, for their purpose, if not one,
Two ordinary men had done,
But halt—maimed—deaf—and dumb—and blind,
The four scarce served the use designed.
And, were it not that hundreds live,
Who can their testimony give,
How, in a certain town, the case
I have related, once took place,
Many, no doubt, would be suspicious
That the whole story was fictitious,

And that I wished to show in rhyme,
The silly loss of toil and time,
Which almost always happens, when
A knot of literary men,
Joint authors, 'mongst themselves, unite
A work to edite or to write.
Each wants some needful requisite
Of language, power, style, or wit,
And each the other's aid expects,
To hide his failings and defects.



THE OWL AND THE LAMP — THE DOGS AND THE
BONE-GRUBBER.

SOME critics wait, with prudent care,
Coward assassins that they are,—
Until their hapless victim dies,
Before against his fame they rise ;
For living authors have a sting,
Which they may use in answering.

A tale, which suits such persons well,
My good old grandam used to tell.
By chance an owl, (I've heard her say,)
Entered a convent hall one day —
I'm wrong — one day it could not be,
No doubt, full many a degree
Had sunk the flaming charioteer
Beneath the western hemisphere.
Be that however false or true,
As through the passages she flew,
A lamp, or lantern, I forget
Which 'twas, the bird of wisdom met,
And, turning suddenly about,
To this effect she hooted out,
“Lamp ! with what ecstasy divine,
Would I suck up that oil of thine !
Did not thy flame so fiercely rise,
And with its radiance blind my eyes.
But, though I dare not venture now
Upon thy well trimmed light, I vow,
If I some future day return,
When thou art out and cannot burn,
Boldly thy harmless wick I'll pull,
And have a sumptuous belly-full !”

Now though the critics whom I lash
Resent my liberty, they gnash
Their literary teeth in vain,—
Have at their worships once again !—
Here is a tale with touches rife,
Which draw their portrait to the life.
A dealer then, in bones and rags,
Was grubbing up, to fill his bags,
A dunghill or some other place,
When two of Cerberus's race
Barked at him, as they always do
When fellows of his stamp they view ;
“ Leave the poor wretch,” exclaimed their sire,
“ He is too worthless for your ire,—
A mastiff dead he'll skin, but flees
Whene'er a living one he sees.”



THE MAID AND THE BROOM.

A MAID was sweeping out a room
With a decayed and worn out-broom ;

“ A murrain take such filthy things !”
She grumbled ; “ sure the dirt it brings
In dust and fragments, leaves the floor
In worse condition than before.”

The modern critic, who corrects
What to his wisdom seem defects
In ancient authors’ prose and verse,
Not seldom leaves them ten times worse ;
Far be it from me to speak his doom,
But let him think himself the broom ;
The words which from the servant fell,
Perhaps may suit him quite as well.

THE PEACOCK AND THE CROW.

A PEACOCK and a crow, one day,
(I vouch the truth of what I say,)
Exchanged a challenge, and agreed
To make a trial of their speed.

Now, which first lighted on the place,
Fixed for the limit of the race,

He'll guess, with certainty, in troth,
Who knows the qualities of both.
"Stop!" cried the peacock, vexed to find
The crow was leaving him behind ;
"Hear what I think of you at least—
You are a black and ugly beast!"
The crow held calmly on his flight—
"Hark!" screamed the other, hoarse with spite,
And at his voice's utmost stretch,—
"You are a vile ill-omened wretch !
I loath the very sight, I do,
Of such a filthy swine as you ;
Pray how long is it since you fed,
Upon the bodies of the dead?"
"I do not see, upon my soul,"
Exclaimed the crow, and reached the goal,
"That what you say has aught to do
With the dispute between us two,
Since the sole point we now contest,
Is which of us can fly the best."

When in the wise man's works, in vain
A fool has sought defect or stain,
He wreaks his envious indignation
In personal vituperation.

THE ZOOLOGIST AND THE LIZARDS.

UPON a garden's sunny side,
A sage zoologist espied
Two lizards once—he seized the prize,
And bore them home to anatomize.

The plumper one, (for one was slim)
He takes and slaughters limb by limb,
The microscope he next applies—
Observes the head—the tail—the eyes,—
Pores o'er each part—without—within—
Back—legs—intestines—belly—skin.
He takes his pen, then looks once more,
Writes a few lines, and reads them o'er,
And, when his notes are full and plain,
Turns to the butchery again.
While yet his zeal is quite alive,
Some virtuoso friends arrive,
To whom he shows what he has written ;
Some are with admiration smitten—
Some hear with coldness his reflections—
While others doubt and raise objections.

The anatomizing mania pass'd,
 Our friend began to find, at last,
 He'd had enough of lizards ; so
 He let the slim survivor go.
 Soon as her ancient haunts she found,
 The neighbours all came flocking round,
 And she proceeded to declare,
 The whole unheard and strange affair.
 "There's not a doubt," she thus went on,—
 "With my own eyes I saw it done,—
 I saw the man a whole day bend,
 Above the carcase of our friend :
 Who calls us reptiles now ? how long
 Shall we submit to such a wrong,
 When we have qualities, inviting
 Such eager search, such careful writing ?
 My noble brethren—give not way !
 They value us, whate'er they say."

And miserable authors, who
 Are treated thus, will think thus too ;
 Such men much honour does befall,
 If they are criticised at all.
 A superficial view and slight
 Befits the nonsense that they write,—

To fuss about a lizard's worth,
But tempts these reptiles of the earth
With arrogance to shout away :
“ They value us, whate'er they say.”



THE EGGS.

'Tis said, that in a certain isle,
Lying, due eastward, many a mile
Beyond the straits of Borneo,
(The name of which I do not know,
Nor do I wish to search it out,
It had some name, I do not doubt,)
There ne'er was seen an egg, or hen,
Until some foreign merchantmen,
Who on the coast had chanced to touch,
Left them some fowls, which bred so much,
That eggs, ere long, so plenteous were,
As to become the common fare.
At first, they eat them only boiled,
Nor after finer cookery toiled ;

For this, the best and simplest mode,
The strangers who had left them, showed.

This state of things could not endure ;
So, when a well-known epicure
Invented fritters, it is said,
Applauses rained upon his head :
But scarce this fancy had been broached,
When lo ! another eat them poached.
Blest thought ! what praises did it earn !
Yet, before long, it fell in turn,
For, worthy of immortal fame,
The pancake and the omelet came.
All owned eggs then were eggs indeed !
Nor thought improvement could succeed ;
But scarce a year had passed away,
When an old gourmand cried, one day ;
“ Dolts that ye are, a dish to praise,
Cooked in such unsubstantial ways ;
Eat them with bacon, as I do.”
The hint through all the kitchens flew,
And the new fashion, for a while,
Made quite a ferment in the isle.
But as, with looks serene and calm,
The gourmand thought he’d won the palm,

A stranger tore it from his brow,
By buttered eggs, which reign e'en now.

Now if the fancy ranged so high
In plain and common cookery,
How can I task my recollections
With all the elegant confections,
Which, in their turn, applauses won ?
Custards and creams,—eggs, whipt and spun,
Conserves, and syrup, and sherbet,
And many more, which I forget.
All claimed the praise of something new,
And all gained honours more than due,
Until a sage his satire bent,
To dissipate their self-content.
“ My friends,” the censor cried, one day,
“ For cooking in outlandish way
The merit may be other men’s ;
But I praise him who brought us hens.”

If I my judgment may declare,
I often think we well could spare
Some hundred modern authors, who
Only in name and type are new ;—
Perhaps it might be worth their while,
To fritter eggs, in some such isle.

THE FROGS AND THE BULRUSHES.

WHERE Tagus rolls his golden flood,
 A frog, of small experience, stood
 Praising the rushes growing there,
 How strong, and smooth, and green, they were !
 It chanced, just then, a wind there blew,
 That snapped the tallest rush in two :
 The frog's wise mother hopped up to it,
 And called her son to come and view it.
 " You see," she said, " how wrong it is
 To judge from outward qualities :
 Without, 'tis round and smooth enough,
 Within, all emptiness and puff."

If this sage frog had read some rhymés
 Which pass for poems in our times,
 I know not how she could express,
 In better terms, their worthlessness.

THE OILMAN'S ASS.

A CERTAIN ass, whose daily toil
 A man employed, who dealt in oil,
 Bearing a load not over light,
 Had reached his home one pitch-dark night ;
 Right glad to know his work was done,
 Straight to his stall he made a run,
 Never observed the door was barred,
 And struck his head a blow so hard,
 That, stunned, and frightened with the wound,
 He fell half lifeless to the ground.

“ Unhappy me ! ” he cried, “ good lack !
 With all this oil upon my back,
 How hard it is, I am not able
 To have one light within my stable ! ”

I fear this tale may give offence
 To some, who no sort of expense
 Of time, and cash, and labour heed,
 In buying books they never read.

They'll be offended ? let them be —
 But why they should I scarcely see,
 For ere they treat my fables so,
 They must peruse them — will they ? No.



THE PARROT, THE JAY, AND THE MAGPIE.

A JAY, who heard a parrot speaking,
 Instead of man's instruction seeking,
 To learn the idiom, preferred
 The lessons of the ill-taught bird,
 And, after only one rehearsal
 Finding her words and accents terse all,
 Believed she had no more to learn
 And taught the magpie in her turn ;
 As for the magpie — she, they say,
 Acquired about as much as they,
 Who seek to gain their information
 From a base copy or translation.

THE PORTRAIT.

No doubt, it is a style unmeet,
 That foreign phrase and eke conceit
 Should with our native tongue combine,
 But sooth, lest any should opine
 That I would peradventure praise
 The style yclept of olden days,
 I will a tale, right merrie, sing,
 And, that it may unto him bring
 The greater pleasaunce and content,
 Of sayings old and new yblent.

A portrait painter could not see
 Withouten some small jealousie,
 The paintings of the masters old —
 How much they pleased — how high they sold,
 And deemed it would be worth his while
 To imitate their touch and style.
 It fortunèd that a noble wight,
 Of lofty rank and titles bright,
 Upon a time applied to him
 Deftly his portrait for to limn.

And he, who long had sought in vain
Such opportunity, would fain
In dress right ancient — well-away !
His lordship's lineaments pourtray,
Woting, he should by such a deed
Obtain the greater praise and meed.

Panting with hopes that never ceased,
To be a Vandyck at the least,
Soon as upon the form and face
His brush had put the final grace,
He dressed them, not in wonted wise,
But in the very quaintest guise,
And eftsoons to my lord it bore,
Who slightly glanced the picture o'er
And wax'ed wondrous strange I ween !
To view the draperies loose and sheen
Which round about his body fell,
Albeit the likeness pleased him well.
Forthy, he cast about, to pay
The painter in his proper way :
It happened he had long possessed,
Close hoarded in an oaken chest,
Old monies, of but little stead,
From his forbears inherited ;

Some were scarce silver coins of Rome —
Some of our whilome kings at home —
Of divers fashion, such we find
Our Henrys and our Edwards coined ;
Groats — nobles — marks — and angels too —
Nay, an I be acquainted true,
Some shillings which th' historian names
Made current by the second James,
What time, exiled from England's throne,
In Erin's isle he fought his fone.

A purse of these, all staid and grave
The courtier to the painter gave.

“ Fair sir,” the latter, stounded, cried,
Soon as he saw the coins inside,
“ If with these medals I should hie
Forth to the market food to buy,
Certes, small weight my back would bend,
As homeward, jeered at, I should wend.”

“ Perdie !” the other strait returned,
“ I pay you in the coin you've earned,
Sith you have dight my form about
With garments erst genteel, no doubt,
But which, in our days, no one wears
Save mountebanks at shows and fairs :

Take back the picture, and, straitway,
Change all the costume as I say ;
Cut down these draperies to a coat —
Tear that great collar from my throat —
And place instead a white cravat ;
Next take the feather from the hat —
Lessen the brim, and doff full soon
The ancient hose, and turned-up shoon ;
And, in their stead, be pleased to put
Breeches and pumps of modern cut.
Last, change that great two-handed sword
To rapier fit for courtly lord ;
For by my ancestry, I vow,
That, as you have arrayed me now,
None of my friends could recognize
My features under such disguise :
This done — your meed shall straight be told
In modern coined and current gold.”

Now if this worthy painter's whim
Provoketh us to laugh at him,
Natheless, we may as justly smile
When modern poets mix their style
With many an old affected phrase,
Which sounded well in by-gone days.

Doubtless, they such conceive to be
All nature and simplicity,
Nor care to make their sense obscure
So that they have the language pure —
And think those words must sweetly chime
Which pleased the ears of Arthur's time.

THE TWO THRUSHES.

A SAGE old thrush was once discipling
His son-in-law, a hair-brained stripling,
In the purveying art ; he knew,
He said, where vines in plenty grew,
Whose fruit delicious, if he'd come,
He might devour ad libitum.
“ Ha ! fruit ! — and is it good, I pray ?
My honoured sir, do show the way.”
“ Come, then, my son,” the old one cried,
“ I to the spot will be your guide —
You can't imagine what a treat —
Such fruit it is — so plump ! — so sweet !”

He said, and, gliding through the air,
They reached the vines, and halted there.

Soon as the grapes the youngster spied,
“ Is this the fruit you praise ?” he cried —
“ Why — an old bird, sir, as you are,
Should judge, I think, more wisely far,
Than to admire, or hold as good
Such half-grown — small — and worthless food ;—
Come, see a fruit which long I’ve known,
In yonder garden, and you’ll own
That not without some cause I sneer
At your poor, dwarfish, berries here.”
“ Well !” said the other — “ lead the way,
But I’ll my head and feathers lay,
Before I see it, ’twill be found
Not worth those skins upon the ground.”
They reached the spot the youth had named,
And he triumphantly exclaimed,
“ Show me the fruit to equal mine —
A size so great — a shape so fine —
Now — now — your silly taste confess.”
It was a — pumpkin ! nothing less.

Now, that a thrush should take this fancy,
Without much marvelling I can see,

But it is truly monstrous, when
Men, who are held as learned men,
All books, whate'er they be, despise,
Unless of largest bulk and size ;
A book is great, if good at all,
If bad — it cannot be too small.

THE TOAD AND THE OWL.

AN owl from public notice shrunk,
Half buried in the hollow trunk
Of a decayed and aged tree ;
Whom as a toad once chanced to see,
Up to the root he slowly crawled,
And thus impertinently bawled :
“ Ho ! Madam Melancholy, there —
Why thus d'ye shun the sun and air ?
Vouchsafe your countenance to show,
For what it is I'd like to know.”
“ Sir, I do not,” the owl replied,
“ Myself upon my beauty pride,

And 'tis for this I have the grace,
During the day, to hide my face ;
But you, Sir Toad, who *will* display
Your ugly loathsome form by day,
T'would be as well, upon my soul,
If you were in another hole."

Alas ! how pitiful a price,
We authors put on such advice —
Ever to print and publish mad,
Whether the work be good or bad—
Perhaps too bad to see the light —
But ah ! my friends, such thoughts we slight,
And public toads had rather be,
Than owls, and in obscurity.

THE ASS AND HIS MASTER.

"THE blockhead public values still,
At the same worth both good and ill,
My pen the taste depraved obeys,
And writes its worst, secure of praise."

A playwright, of the lowest station,
Poured forth, one day, this declamation,
Excusing, under such pretence,
His own defects and want of sense ;
But a shrewd poet who was nigh,
Approached and made him this reply :
“ A man, I know not what his class,
Or rich—or poor—possessed an ass ;
He made him bear—he made him draw—
But gave him nought to eat but straw,
And, as he gave it, always cried,
‘ Eat—since with this you’re satisfied.’
The patient beast bore all awhile ;
At length his master roused his bile,
So oft the self-same thing declaring ;
’Twas e’en beyond an ass’s bearing !
So, as he took his straw, one day,
He thus, with boldness, said his say :
‘ I eat, because I wish to live,
Whatever you may choose to give ;
But why the unjust conclusion draw,
That therefore I prefer your straw ?
Give me some corn to nibble at,
And see if I don’t relish that.’ ”

Beware, ye authors, how ye blame
The public taste to veil your shame ;
You give her straw, perforce she chews it ;
Try her with corn,—she'll not refuse it.



THE COCK AND HIS COMBATS

A HAUGHTY cock, who thought, no doubt,
That he was mighty brave, fell out
(It was a quarrel of his picking)
With a young sturdy bantam chicken.
Such high words passed between the two,
That both at last indignant flew,
Flapped, pecked, and spurred, like fiends of hell,
And the young dunghill fought so well,
He quickly made the other yield
The battle, and the battle-field.
“Hem !” said the conquered sultan, sneering,
(But not till he was out of hearing,)
“He'll make no bad a cock, I vow,
The little fellow's youthful now.”

He never fought that chicken more,
But, from an ancient grudge he bore
Against an aged cock, whose scars
Showed him a veteran in the wars,
Our champion challenged him, one day,
And got so worsted in the fray,
That, with the two defeats together,
He was quite stripped of comb and feather :
As, thus defaced in every feature,
He slunk away—"The poor old creature !"
He muttered, "limb by limb I'd tear him—
Only he doats, and so I spare him."

In strife of literary kind,
Authors, this lesson bear in mind —
With whomsoever you engage,
Judge not their talents by their age.

THE VIPER AND THE LEECH.

"DEAR sister Leech," the viper cried,
Gently approaching to her side,

‘ Since you, like me, bite when you can,
Why does unjust and partial man
So differently treat the two ?
Submitting to be bit by you,
Yet shunning me with hate and fear,
And shuddering, if I come but near.”
“ Brother,” replied the leech, “ you’re right,
In saying that we both do bite :
But, as ’tis easy to detect,
With very different effect.
My mouth a healing virtue gives,
I bite the dying man, he lives :
While, and you know it to be true,
The healthiest dies, if touched by you.”
Observe, ye readers, then, and writers,
That critics, doubtless, all are biters ;
Yet that a wide distinction runs
’Twixt useful, and malignant ones.

THE BEETLE.

I'VE such a subject for a tale !
 But ah ! sometimes the muse will fail,
 And mine, I know not how it is,
 Seems in her freaks and fantasies ;
 Wherefore I give my tale to him,
 Whose mind may be in better trim.
 For writing fables such as these,
 Requires a certain art and ease,
 In rhythm, and measures smooth and terse,
 To hide the labour of the verse ;
 And this facility admired,
 Comes not as often as required.

Well, let a beetle have the glory
 Of being the hero of the story,
 For, to preserve the moral's style,
 The hero must be low and vile.
 Now those who know this creature's ways,
 See that on vilest things he preys ;
 Eats any filth that chance bestows,
 Yet turns with loathing from the rose.

And here the author should commence,
With all his powers of eloquence,
To tell us what the cause may be
For such a strange antipathy.
But then, to show the reasons clear
For making the allusion here, —
Ah ! how his hapless head must ache,
Unless his wits are quite awake.

Thus rhyming on, with, now and then,
A figure flowing from his pen,
He'll end, unless the truth he miss,
With some such summing up as this :
That as the rose, so sweetly graced,
Is odious to a beetle's taste :
So fancies pleasing and refined,
Disgust a coarse and Gothic mind.



THE GOAT AND THE HORSE.

A GOAT, one day, was drinking in
The music of a violin,

Which, struck by some harmonious bow,
Re-echoed from the vale below ;
Enchanted, to the gentle sound
Her feet kept time upon the ground.
It chanced a certain horse was near,
Whose head thrown back, and pricked up ear,
Showed that he likewise listening stood,
Absorbed, and thoughtless of his food ;
Whom, on the music's lengthened rest,
The goat advancing, thus addressed :

“ Hear you the sounds so soft, that flow
From yonder violin ? — then know,
Those strings did once the belly line,
Of a late dear-loved friend of mine.
Oh ! may I hope as blest a fate
Will at some time myself await,
When my intestines too may please,
With cadences as sweet as these !”

The nag turned round, and thus replied :
“ I think those strings from your inside,
Which you so highly prize, would be
Of little value, but for me.
What but my tail the hairs affords,
Which wake the else all-silent chords ?

The anguish which I underwent,
I think no more of now, content
To see how useful they are found,
In bringing forth so sweet a sound.
But you,—I think you have not said
What pleasure you will feel, when dead.”

Bad authors thus, who vainly strive
To gain applause, while yet alive,
Trust to posterity for praise,
And wear prospectively the bays.



THE PURCHASE OF THE ASS.

AN ass, one day, passed through the street,
So gay an ass 'tis rare to meet,
His saddle, and his halter too,
Were both, to all appearance, new ;
Ribbons of yellow, and of red,
With tufts and tassels, decked his head,
With plaits, rosettes, and bows as well,
And here and there was hung a bell,

Which, as he slowly trotted by,
Jingled together merrily.

It seems this jewel of a beast
Had once, (so I was told, at least,)
Been numbered 'mongst the roving stud,
Of a shrewd knave of gipsey blood,
(A race, whatever else their worth,
Not the most honest upon earth ;)
And he had managed, as they can,
To trick an unsuspecting man,
Who, dazzled with the brilliant dress,
Purchased the ass with eagerness ;
Nor even tried the creature's paces,
As is most prudent in such cases.
That he found reasons for repentance,
Appears from a succeeding sentence.

Soon as he reached his poor abode,
He to his friends and neighbours showed
The famous purchase he had made,
And all the ornaments displayed.
“ Upon my word, 'tis very fine,”
One made reply ; “ but, comrade mine,
Suppose we see if he possess
A body worthy of his dress.”

No sooner was it said, than done ;
They stripped the trappings, one by one,
And, when the saddle was removed,
The very first inspection proved
The justice of the friend's suspicion,
As to the animal's condition.
Upon his back, sharp-boned and lean,
No less than six large sores were seen ;
Cracks and contusions eight or ten,
With here and there a weal or wen,
And an old tumour still unhealed,
Which lay beneath the girth concealed.
“ An ass, indeed ! ” the dupe exclaimed,
Of his stupidity ashamed ;
“ I am the greatest ass, by Heaven !
Who, for mere show, my cash have given.”

I must confess, when I reflect
On this occurrence, its effect
Appears a satire, by design,
Upon a certain friend of mine,
Who, (much in want of such advice,)
Has bought, at an enormous price,
A book, most elegantly bound,
Embossed, and stamped, and gilt all round,

And in the very finest skin, —
Which is not worth a straw within.



THE SILKWORM AND THE CATERPILLAR.

My readers may recall to mind,
The club of scientific kind,
Which, formed amongst the brute creation,
I mentioned in a late narration.

'Mongst other learned talk, it chanced,
That some one on a subject glanced,
Which to the silkworm's nature led,
Whose delicate and precious thread,
In one of this same conclave's sessions,
Was hailed with rapturous expressions ;
And when a ball which she had spun
Was shown, fresh eulogies it won :
The very mole, though sightless, still,
Owned 'twas a miracle of skill.

Amidst this praise by all conferred,
The caterpillar's voice was heard,

Grumbling in most abusive terms,
Calling the spinners stupid worms ;
Their silk but fit to hang on briars,
And those who praised it, fools and liars.

“ Why, how is this ?” they asked with wonder,
“ That the poor caterpillar, yonder,
Alone, amongst us all, should dare
To blame the work we think so fair ?”
“ Soft,” said the fox, “ I have it here ;
Nought in the world can be more clear :
Brethren, forgive the creature rash,
She likewise spins, — though nought but trash.”

Authors of noble works, whom hate
And persecution sure await,
When envious scribes your fame assail,
Just tell them this instructive tale.



THE TURKEY.

A TURKEY, who with sorrow knew
How heavily her children flew,

Resolved to have some lighter sons,
Though they should all be bastard ones.
To gain this end she sallied out,
And robbed the birds that built about :
Hawk—pigeon—goldfinch—great and small—
She sought and pilfered eggs from all,
From birds of every form and feather,
And in her nest mixed all together.
Long did she sit, and no small portion
Perished by addling and abortion,
The others, bursting from the shell,
Soon like their sires flew strong and well.
The turkey, with the brood delighted,
Hundreds of neighbouring birds invited,
To view this covey of her rearing,
But, on the young birds first appearing,
Each father quickly claimed his own,
Flew off, and left the thief alone.

Robbers from others' works,—who dare
To publish what you steal, beware,—
Some author will, at every line,
Be heard exclaiming, " This is mine."
Till, of your spurious brood bereft,
We see what other you have left.

THE ANIMALS' CONCERT.

YE who thus far have heard my strain,
 Noble or gentle, once again,
 Hark to my lyre ! I've tuned its strings—
 Hark ! in my voice Apollo sings —
 And hark !—let none of you be prude
 To praise the song I thus prelude.

The lion's court was glad and gay,
 It was the monarch's natal day,
 And all his subjects met with glee,
 To show their love and loyalty.
 Addresses and congratulations —
 And kissing hands—and presentations,
 Came in their turn, and, last of all,
 The courtiers had arranged a ball,
 Which (to be stylish) 'twas agreed,
 A first-rate concert should precede.

Now, as it frequently occurs
 In choosing parts and characters,
 (E'en amongst us) that those who do them,
 Are not the best adapted to them,

The managers forgot to ask
The jolly blackbird to the task,
Nor did they, even for a minute,
Think of the nightingale or linnet,
Nor how the sky-lark and canary
Might with their strains the music vary ;
Singers more confident and strong,
Though, may-be, not so famed for song,
Offered, with all the pride of skill,
The vacant orchestra to fill.

Before the appointed hour had come,
The choristers, with buz and hum,
And modest whispers half aloud,
Thus spoke amongst the courtly crowd :
“ Really, your lordships can't imagine —
The concert will be so engaging,
But I say nought—'twould not be fair,
Only remember I am there.”

The band, at length, began to assume
Their stations in the drawing-room—
First-rate musicians, we must own,
As by the following list is shown :
Two crickets took the treble places —
Two gadflies the contralto graces —

The tenors were an owl and frog—
The ass was bass—and bass the hog.

Now there's but little need to speak,
From bray, and grunt, and croak, and squeak,
How delicate a concord rose,—
That my shrewd reader will suppose ;
Such was the harmony's effect,
That, e'en forgetting the respect
Due to their monarch's rank and years,
Most of the audience stopped their ears.

The frog, who saw enough to learn
Which way affairs were like to turn,
And how small augury they bore
Of hurrah ! bravo ! and encore !
Shrugged up her shoulders, shook her head,
And, hopping to some distance, said,
Thinking the others' skill to impugn :
' Lord ! how the ass sings out of tune !'
" I madam !" cried the ass, " you're wrong ;
Those ugly trebles spoil the song."
" You lie," a cricket squalled, " no doubt
It is the hog that puts us out."
" Ho ! fair and softly, madam shrill,"
He answered, " why attack my skill ?

I'm not surprised the strain is foul,
When your best tenor is an owl."
"Hoot!—hoot!" returned the bird of night,
"Sir bristly, learn to be polite,
Those low-lived gadflies" "Leave my court!
(The lion cut the matter short)
Unblushing scoundrels ev'ry one —
Before your horrid noise begun,
Did you not, one and all, agree
In saying how divine 'twould be?
And for himself, by various ways,
Each then claimed all the expected praise.
But now you find the infernal sound
Has raised disgust in all around,
Each strives his part in it to smother,
And shifts the blame upon another.
Begone! nor ever more pollute
Our presence; and henceforth be mute;
For, by the glories of my reign,
If e'er I hear you sing again,
Look in a louder tone to bawl —
I will make mincemeat of ye all!"
Oh! that my judgment might presume
To give some authors such a doom,

Who, working three or four together,
If the book takes, each claims the feather,
If otherwise—the censure shuns,
And shifts it on the other ones.

THE MONKEY AND THE MAGPIE.

A CERTAIN magpie once invited
(From an old book the tale is cited)
One of the cunning monkey race,
To see her in her dwelling place.
“Do come,” she said, with winning air,
“You’ll see some things worth seeing there,
You know with what address I steal,
And afterwards my thefts conceal;
Come—and I’ll show you where they ’re hid,
Behind a broken coffer lid.”
“Well, be it so,” the other cried,
“Madam, vouchsafe to be my guide.”
The magpie gaily led the way,
To where her hidden jewels lay,

And, when at length the room she found,
First peeping through the doors around,
She listened with attentive ear,
Lest any lurkers should be near ;
And beckoning with mysterious look,
Close to the hole the monkey took.

First, then, before his wondering view,
A faded garter forth she drew ;
And after that, two medals gilt —
A lady's hoop—a piece of quilt —
Of button-shanks a goodly hoard —
The rusted fragment of a sword —
A pocket-comb with broken teeth —
A strip of gauze—a scissor sheath —
Three fiddle-pegs with cat-gut tied,
And multitudes of things beside.
“ Well, now,” the magpie cried, at last,
“ Am I not wealthiest of my caste ?
Come, don't be envious—frankly own,
So rich a hoard was never known.”
The monkey stared at her awhile,
And with a sort of roguish smile,
“ Really,” he cried, “ beyond objection,
You have a beautiful collection,

But mine, I think, will yours outdo,
For what I store is useful too.
Look, if you doubt,—within my jaws
There lie concealed two bags or craws,
Which lessen and distend at pleasure,
And within which I keep my treasure.
You, like a fool, your storehouse fill
With rags, and trash more worthless still ;
But mine are hoards of things to eat —
Filberts and nuts — and sweets and meat —
So when my exigencies cause
I find provision in my jaws.”

And this shrewd monkey—was his jeer
Meant only for a magpie’s ear ?
Believe me, but I’m half inclined
To think his satire was designed
To teach some authors of our day,
Whose writings in their style display
A somewhat similar illusion —
A miscellaneous confusion
Of ev’ry trifling thing on earth,
Without one spark of wit or worth.

THE WOLF AND THE SHEPHERD.

A WOLF once came a shepherd nigh :
 " My friend," said he, " I know not why
 Your most uncharitable spirit
 Treats me with hate I do not merit ?
 What warmth my skin in colds ensures !
 A thousand human pains it cures,
 Besides that fleas, and insects vile
 Will never touch it or defile :
 My claws the badger's far outprize
 In curing weakness of the eyes ;
 My teeth — you know the use of them,
 Nor will my healing grease condemn."
 " Beast that thou art !" the shepherd said,
 " The curse of Heaven be on thy head —
 Full as thou art of ev'ry evil,
 What serves thy little good ?" — The devil
 Take all the wolves of books, I say,
 That prowl about the town to-day.

THE GARDENER AND HIS MASTER.

AMIDST fair beds of blooming flowers,
A fountain cast its graceful showers,
Which, as they fell, a basin formed
Where carp and other pond-fish swarmed.
The gardener, who had little care
So that his flowers grew strong and fair,
Carried so largely, every day,
The water to their roots away,
That the poor fish scarce cover found,
Struggling and gasping on the ground.

Just then, the master from the town
To see his country seat came down,
And, through the garden as he went,
Observing such mismanagement,
His servant's negligence reproved ;
Not but that Flora's charms he loved,
Only, undoubtedly, he knew
Carps make a most delicious stew.

The gardener his mistake deplored,
And, thinking so to please his lord,
Lest he should draw the fountain dry,
He let the plants unwatered die.

It happened in a week or two,
The master once again pass'd through,
And felt indignant on descrying
His choicest flowers all dead or dying ;
So summoning the foolish man
He thus in angry tone began :
“ Unworthy of the pay you earn —
Fool ! will you never wisdom learn ?
Neither my hapless fishes slaughter,
By robbing them of all the water ;
Nor leave my flowers to fade and fall
By never watering them at all.”

The maxim may be trite and old,
But let it once again be told,
Would you your works successful see,
Join pleasure to utility.

THE MONKEY.

A monkey in a silken dress
 Remains a monkey not the less ;
 So says the proverb — so say I —
 And here, before my reader's eye
 I'll mingle, (easier said than done,)
 The proverb and a tale in one.

A monkey dressed himself, one day,
 In a rich suit of colours gay,
 Such as at theatre and fair
 The harlequin is wont to wear ;
 (For me, I must confess, I doubt
 That he had thus himself decked out —
 Most likely 'twas his master's gift ;
 For he'd have made a sorry shift
 To find a tailor and the stuff —
 The proverb says it — that's enough.)
 Thus gallantly attired, he flung
 A window up, and forth he sprung,
 And after many a fearful bound
 From roof to roof, he reached the ground,

And straitway started on the road
For Tetuan, his old abode.
The proverb does not mention this,
But in a work not wrote amiss,
Which, from its rarity, is known
But to a lucky few alone,
The author makes the facts appear
As I have introduced them here.

I know not, any more than he,
Whether the monkey crossed the sea,
And sought his home by way of Fez,
Or by the isthmus of Suez ;
Thus much at least I may declare,
That he arrived in safety there.
His brethren's haunts were quickly found,
And naked monkies flocked around,
Who, of offending him afraid,
With much respect their homage paid,
Not doubting, one so richly dressed
Must be of every worth possessed :
Active and cunning — brave and sage —
In short a mighty personage.
With unanimity they chose,
(Such is the power of fine clothes,)

To entrust him with the sole commission
Of an important expedition
To the interior for forage,
A charge demanding skill and courage,
And upon which, howe'er it ended,
The food and lives of all depended.

Invested with supreme command,
The new made chief led on his band,
Soon lost his way, and, bad on bad,
With that, what little sense he had.
Yet his poor fools of comrades, still
Confiding, followed at his will
O'er woods and vallies, rocks and glens,
Rivers and deserts, bogs and fens,
Until, at length, the day was done,
Without one single mouthful won.
The dire effects of this disgrace
Threatened the extinction of the race,
And monkeys to this hour confess,
Talents are not conferred by dress.

But e'en on our side of the globe
I have seen monkees, who the robe
Of doctors and professors wore,
And yet were monkees as before.

THE SQUIRREL AND THE HORSE.

A SQUIRREL, on his hind-legs raised,
Upon a noble charger gazed,
Who, docile to the spur and rein,
Went through his manage on the plain ;
Now seeming like the wind to fly,
Now gracefully curvetting by.

“ Good sir,” the little tumbler said,
And, with much coolness, scratched his head,
“ In all your swiftness, skill, and spirit,
I do not see there’s much of merit ;
For, all you seem so proud to do,
I can perform, and better too ;
I’m light and nimble, brisk, and sprightly,
I trot, and skip, and canter lightly,
Backwards and forwards — here and there,
Now on the earth — now in the air —
From bough to bough — from hill to hill,
And never for a moment still.”

The courser tossed his head on high,
And made the squirrel this reply :

" My little nimble jealous friend,
 Those turns and tumbles without end —
 That hither, thither, restless springing —
 Those ups and downs, and leaps and swinging —
 And other feats more wondrous far,
 Pray tell me, of what use they are?
 But what I do, this praise may claim —
 My master's service is my aim,
 And laudably I use for him
 My warmth of blood and strength of limb."

Authors, revolve this fable's moral —
 And look, lest haply, like the squirrel,
 In vain and frivolous pursuits
 You waste your talents and their fruits.



THE COCK, THE HOG, AND THE LAMB.

WITHIN a paddock's space there stood,
 Divided by a fence of wood,
 A hen-house, where, with fiery crown,
 A cock fierce strutted up and down.

On th'other side, within a sty,
 A fattening hog was wont to lie ;
 And, in the midst, a lamb was seen
 Grazing upon the pasture green :
 Thus lived these amiable three
 In happiness and amity.

Well, (by your favour be it said,)
 The hog, one day, got out of bed,
 And, yawning as if scarce awake,
 Thus to the lamb benignly spake,
 " How sweet is sleep ! how blest a fate
 To lie in such pacific state —
 How healthful too ! — my little dear,
 The wisdom of experience hear ;
 This short and miserable life
 Is with unnumbered evils rife,
 But trust me, there is not a bliss
 Half so delectable as this,
 To stretch oneself upon the ground,
 And snore, and let the world turn round."

" Hold," cried the cock, " Sir Lazy, there —
 My little innocent, beware —
 Would you be healthy, strong and light,
 Sleep ne'er by day — and spare by night ;

And, if long life you tender dear,
Rise ere the dawn throughout the year ;
For sleep benumbs, and wastes, and dries,
The mind's and body's faculties."

The lamb, perplexed between the two,
Could not determine what to do,
Nor (being so inexperienced) guessed
That each advised, what each liked best.

So authors, we are apt to find,
Lay axioms down for all mankind,
As the best rules for practice known,
Merely because they suit their own.



THE WATCHES.

A COURTIER, famed for banquets fine,
Invited once some friends to dine,
And one of them, a tardy guest,
Coming an hour behind the rest,
Regretted he had made them wait,
But still denied that he was late.

“ For look,” he cried, and, full in view,
Forth from his fob his watch he drew,
“ I’ve come in time, as I’m alive,
You see the hand is just at five.”
“ What stuff!” they cried; “ you surely know
Your watch is near an hour too slow.”
“ Indeed ! but sirs,” he said, perplexed,
“ Can I do more than show my text ?
Here is my watch,” The reader sage
Will see this worthy personage
Resembles those, who, when attacked
For some absurd and foolish act,
Seize, as their shield against defeat,
The first authority they meet.

But to return — to solve the doubt,
The guests all drew their watches out,
But one was slow, and one was fast,
One was a quarter — one half past,
One wanted twenty minutes to —
While one, e’en time himself outflew,
And, ticking on at wondrous rate,
Was just upon the stroke of eight.
In short, in such a case of need
Not two amongst them all agreed.

The doubts and cavils thus increased,
Until the giver of the feast,
A man of science known to be,
And skilful in astronomy,
Having with much attention viewed
The sun's meridian altitude
With his chronometer compared,
He thus the mean result declared :
" 'Tis six and just two seconds past —
So, friends, we know the time at last ;
And now, if any of you think
That truth — immortal truth — can sink
Beneath the seeming weight that lies
In dogmas and authorities,
Reflect on this — and tell me whether
She is not worth them all together."

THE TWO TRAVELLERS.

Two travellers once, in weary case,
Had reached a little country place,

And looked about, as well they might,
To find a lodging for the night.
Two neighbours, better than the rest,
Their hospitable offers pressed ;
Prayers, beggings, almost force they used,
And neither one would be refused.

The friends, afraid to give offence
By showing one the preference,
Thus compromised, the feud to smother,
One went with one, and one with th'other.

The house the one preferred, possessed
Attractions for a princely guest ;
A spacious, well paved court before,
With sculptured arms above the door ;
In fact, the whole façade appeared
A structure for a monarch reared.
The other house, in form and height
Not so attractive to the sight,
Was admirably well supplied
With every requisite inside.
And never were apartments seen
More comfortable, light, and clean ;
While the great place, which, seen without,
A mansion seemed beyond a doubt,

Within, was nought but cold and gloom
Scarce width enough for turning room,
Choked up with useless corridors,
And huge walls full of cracks and pores ;
And the poor traveller found his bed
Within a dirty garret spread,
Beneath a roof of thatching thin,
Through which the wind and rain poured in.

Sleepless and cold, he passed the night,
And, rising with the earliest light,
Seeking his friend, to him declared
How miserably he had fared.

“ An useful lesson you have learned,”

The prudent moralist returned,

“ You see how much deception lies

In mere external qualities.

And now, to change the subject, look

How often will you find a book,

Likely attraction to engage

By a well-written title-page,

Which, of its outward show bereft,

Is like the lodging you have left :

Dark style — excluding light and air —

Long passages — which lead no where —

Mean, vulgar thoughts, thatched badly over
By words which yield but sorry cover —
Which, in one line the truth to put,
A palace seems, and *is* a hut.”

THE LEARNED RICH MAN.

A WORTHY, who in riches rolled,
And yet (would this be better told,
Or silent passed ? — I scarce know which,) —
Who was e'en far more fool than rich,
Possessed a mansion in Madrid,
Whose rooms, magnificently hid,
With gold and silver seemed to shine —
With hangings rich, and paintings fine,
And all that money could procure
Of gay and splendid furniture.

“ Pity !” exclaimed a friend, one day,
“ Such splendour should be thrown away,
Merely because one thing we miss,
Most needful in a house like this,

A well stocked library I mean,
In great men's dwellings always seen."

"Upon my word," the owner said,
"The thought ne'er entered in my head ;
But yet there's time — the northern wing
Will surely be the very thing.

I'll have the first upholsterers come
And take the measure of the room,
And fit it up amongst themselves
With rich and spacious cedar shelves,
And when we've settled how it looks
We'll have some talk about the books.

The workmen came — the shelves were framed —

"Well now," the worthy man exclaimed,
(And as he gazed on them he sighed,)

"These shelves must be with books supplied —

Ten or twelve thousand — let me see, —

Twelve thousand ! what a task 'twill be !

Surely an age will scarce suffice, —

And then the toil ! and then the price !

But why in this dilemma dwell ?

Sure painted boards would do as well,

Why should they not ? with lettered backs —

And edges gilt, and such like knacks ?

I know a clever painter, who
Can well such imitation do."

All hands to work.—The artist came,
And painting books of choicest name,
Old, modern, manuscript, and print,
Even improved his patron's hint ;
Who, never of the prospect tired,
So much his counterfeits admired,
That daily through the room he passed,
Reading the titles, and, at last,
Catching so many names, began
To think himself a learned man.

And surely those who only heed
The titles of the books they read,
So erudite a store might hoard,
At less expense from books of board.



THE ROPE-DANCER AND HIS PUPIL.

A TIGHT-ROPE dancer, who, they say,
Was a great master in his way,

Was tutoring a youth to spring
 Upon the slight and yielding string,
 Who, though a novice in the science,
 Had in his talents great reliance,
 And, as on high his steps he tried,
 Thus to his sage instructor cried :
 " This pole you call the counterpoise
 My every attitude annoys ;
 I really cannot think it good
 To use this cumbrous piece of wood,
 In such a business as our's,
 An art requiring all our powers.
 Why should I with this burden couple ?—
 Am I not active, strong, and supple ?
 Come—see me try this step without it,
 I'll manage better, do not doubt it :—
 See, 'tis not difficult at all."
 He said, and let the balance fall,
 And, taking fearlessly a bound,
 He tumbled headlong on the ground,
 With compound fracture of the shin,
 And six or seven ribs crushed in.
 " Unhappy youth !" the master said,
 " What was your truest help and aid,

Impediment you thought to be,—
From art and method if you flee,
Believe me, ere your life has passed,
This tumble will not be your last.”

THE TURNSPIT AND THE MULE.

In days of yore, when watchwork, springs,
And smoke-jacks were in leading strings,
Our sires a neat contrivance found,
To make their meat turn duly round ;
A wheel it was, with stairs supplied,
And a small dog was placed inside,
By whose incessant ambulation,
The joint turned round in just rotation.

A spaniel of this worthy race,
Grew discontented with his place,
And, with a melancholy sigh,
Broke out in this soliloquy :
“ Alas ! how wretched is my lot !
Slave that I am, and all for what ?

For all the exhausting toil I feel,
Sweating in this eternal wheel,
The pickings of the bird I roast,
Will be my recompense at most.
And shall I serve these tyrants still,
Who pay my services so ill?
Soon as they loose me from my tether,
I'll leave the house and town together."

 The cooking over for the day,
True to his word, he sneaked away ;
Strait from the city gates he passed,
Till, in the fields, he came at last
To where a mule of sturdy stature,
Placed in a wheel, was drawing water.
" How now !" he cried, " what's this ? I fear
They 're roasting victuals even here."
" This is no spit, you silly thing,
I raise the water from the spring,"
The mule exclaimed. " Indeed you do ?"
The turnspit cried, " then I will too, —
What though my form is rather slight,
And this same wheel not over light,
Be it as heavy as it may,
I've turned a wheel before to-day,

And, as the work is somewhat harder,
No doubt they keep a better larder,
Besides the sure increase of ration,
'Tis a more glorious occupation."
"Take my advice, you imp of pride,"
He of the water-wheel replied :
"Return your excellency home,
Nor from the spit in future roam ;
My wheel, I'd have you know at length,
Is far beyond a puppy's strength."

The keen laconic mule — how fine
His satire of the fool canine !
And, now I think of it, I'll quote
Some good advice one Horace wrote,
'That authors should of tasks beware,
Which they possess not strength to bear :'
The which in other words reveals,
That turnspits can't turn water-wheels.

THE MACAW AND THE MARMOT.

A GAY and beautiful macaw
 One day from his verandah saw
 A poor Savoyard boy below,
 Who of a marmot made a show.
 Now, an exceeding ugly creature
 The marmot is, in every feature ;
 Yet, with applauses long and loud,
 'Twas greeted by the vulgar crowd,
 And numbers gave their cash to see,
 The foreign curiosity.
 "How strange !" exclaimed our graceful bird,
 Who wondered at the praise conferred,
 And that the creature in the cage,
 Such admiration should engage :
 "How strange ! that they should pay to see
 An ugly animal like thee,
 When here my beauties they may view,
 Worthy their gaze, and gratis too :
 E'en were you beautiful and fair,
 This fact would all your worth impair,

That for the sake of hire and pelf,
You basely prostitute yourself.

A sorry author, who had heard
Up to this point the critic bird,
Hung down his head, and slunk away —
A printer had him in his pay.

THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE SPARROW.

A NIGHTINGALE, with tender throat,
Soft warbling to the organ's note,
Was practising a song, one day,
When a pert sparrow came that way,
And, worthy of his saucy clan,
Flew to the cage and thus began :
“Really, I'm quite surprised that you,
The best-skilled bird I ever knew,
Should to so low a state be brought,
As by your pupil to be taught ;
For from that voice of your's alone,
The organ learnt its every tone.”

"Let it be so," the songster cried,
 "It does in no way hurt my pride,
 Nor my just merits can it dim —
 He learnt of me—I learn of him —
 He strives to catch these tones of mine,
 While I my warblings wild confine
 By that judicious art, which bounds
 His harmonied and measured sounds,
 And which is of no small avail,
 Even to me, a nightingale."

Shall gifted minds instruction spurn,
 And learned men disdain to learn?—
 Such with augmented thirst should glow,
 And study more, the more they know.



THE MULE AND THE TRAVELLER.

FULL to the mouth with hay and corn,
 A hack-mule left the inn one morn,
 Running as if a race to win;
 The rider scarce could hold her in,

Not doubting he should soon alight,
Safe at his quarters for the night.
Not far, however, had they gone,
When she began to flag: "Get on,"
He said, "You can go if you will:
Tck!—tck!—come up!" the mule stood still.
"How now!—come, let us try the spur."
He did,—no use,—she would not stir.
"Perhaps this switch may do her good:"
Slash!—slash!—the beast seemed made of wood.
"I'm half afraid she'll try a fall,—
Or she's fatigued,—perhaps that's all."
Again he spurred,—the curb he drew,—
When, on a sudden, up she flew!—
Kicked right and left,—curvetted,—reared,—
And, as the traveller had feared,
Finding his legs grasped tightly round,
She tumbled with him to the ground.
"You beast!" the man was heard to say,
As groaning on the earth he lay;
"You who went on so well at first,—
Die of the glanders,—and be cursed!"
I'd never trust a mule,—not I,
That starts at first so friskily,

And, when I see an author, in
A high and lofty style begin ;
“ Softly, good man,—take care :” I say,
“ Look to your paces all the way,
Or like the mule you may be found,
At no great distance, on the ground.”



THE WASPS.

AMIDST a cellar's well stocked bin,
There rose a most astounding din ;
A swarm of wasps, a tippling set,
To quaff a social cup, had met,
And, as it frequently occurs,
Amongst such worthy characters,
Nor to such scenes at all unsuiting,
Ere long they all began disputing.

It seems, (unless I've heard amiss,)
The matter in debate was this :
Some old, mature, experienced sages,
Had praised the wines of former ages,

And said, that as for modern wine,
It was not near so bright and fine, —
Did not possess that fragrant savour,
Nor half so delicate a flavour,—
Nor such a body, strength, or worth,—
It was the poorest stuff on earth ;
Indeed, according to their thinking,
Not fit for gentlemanly drinking.

Now though this judgment pleased one side,
Many the truth of it denied,
And, with a different taste possessed,
Declared that modern wines were best.
And ridiculed, with open sneers,
The whims of partial, doating seers,
Who praised old things, nor seemed to care,
So they were ancient, what they were.
Losing all decency and form,
The strife grew personal and warm,
And thus they stormed through thick and thin,
When a grey-headed wasp came in ;
A shrewd old toper, we may swear,
Who having heard the whole affair,
Poured out a glass, and drank it up :
“ Now, by the god of wine and cup !

I vow," he said, ("and now I'll place
Myself as umpire in the case,)
That none is better qualified
On such a subject to decide.
For as to wines, where'er they are,
In cask or bottle, skin or jar,
In cellars stowed — from rafters slung —
Despite of seal, and cork, and bung,
When once I've scented out the grape,
No vessel can my search escape ;
I try the treasures they contain,
Nor ever visit them in vain.
And as for tasting, proving, judging,
(Without due praise to others grudging)
Not Xeres, Malaga, Peralta,
Oporto, Teneriffe and Malta,
So famed for connoisseurs of wine,
Can boast a palate such as mine.
Know, then, 'tis most absurd to think
That all the aged wines we drink
Have gained the flavour which they own
From being kept, and age alone ;
Time has improved them, there's no doubt,
Few things are perfected without ;

But if such wine had not been good
When first 'twas racked within the wood,
Experience tells me, and I know,
'Twould have turned sour long ago ;
For, in those days, (as I may add,)
As now, wine would sometimes be bad.
Then, on the other hand, I say,
That wines, the produce of our day,
New as they are, will often claim
To rank with those of oldest name ;
But even if by us despised,
How can we tell how praised and prized
That very hogshead may not be
By some of our posterity.
With this, then, let the contest cease,
And the two parties make their peace.
Lastly, this sentence is for them :
Bad wine I ever will condemn ;
But when 'tis good and worthy praise,
I care not what its length of days,
Or whether it is old or new,
I quaff it off — so — here's to you.”
And nodding to them, one by one,
He ended as he had begun.

Let learned folks their temper waste
In strife about the palm of taste,
Which some to modern times decree,
And others to antiquity.
The wasp's opinion shall be mine ;
It is with letters as with wine.

THE END.



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